1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda
405

CHAPTER XVII

SACRED DAYS AND NUMBERS

WE have seen that nearly every Toda ceremony has its appointed day or days, and that the choice of these is often dependent on another Toda institution, the sacred day, either of the village or of the dairy. Every clan has certain days of the week on which people are restricted from following many of their ordinary occupations, although they are not the occasions of any special ceremonies. These sacred days are the *madnol* or village day, and the *palinol* or dairy day. Another occasion to which the same kinds of restriction apply is the *arpatsnol*, the day of the week corresponding to that on which the father of a man has died.

THE MADNOL AND PALINOL

The *madnol* is literally the village day. Each village has its *madnol*, and in some cases it would seem that different villages of a clan might have different *madnol*, but in general the *madnol* is the same for the whole clan.

Certain things may not be done on the *madnol*:—

(i) *ponkirthògadi*, a feast may not be given (lit. feast may not divide, *i.e.*, food must not be shared out).

(ii) *kkdvalògadi*, funeral ceremonies may not be performed.

(iii) *kwadrògadi*, nothing may be given (from the village). Since buying implies the departure of money from the village, a secondary consequence is that nothing may be bought on the *madnol*, but if anything is given to an inhabitant of the village, he may bring it into the village on this day.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

527 784 (iv) Women may not leave the village, nor may women from other places come to the village.

621 (v) The people may not bathe nor cut their nails on the *madnol*, and the men may not shave. Clothes may not be washed, nor may the usual cleansing of the house with buffalo-dung be done. The ordinary meals may be prepared, but the people must not cook rice with milk.

(vi) The stone called *tukitthkars* may not be touched.

(vii) The dairyman may not leave the village, and the ordination ceremonies of a dairyman may not take place on this day.

(viii) The people may not migrate from one village to another, nor may the buffaloes be taken from one place to another.

234 527 784 Among the Teivaliol the *madnol* is the only sacred day of the week, but among the Tartharol there is also a dairy day or *palinol*, and if there is more than one dairy there may be one such holy day for each kind of dairy, each named after the dairy, the *wursulinol*, the *kudrpalinol*, or the *tarvaliiol*. Similarly, Taradr has a *kugvalinol* and Kanòdrs a *polnol*.

On these days milk and ghi may not be given out from the dairy, nor may they be sold. Butter and buttermilk may be distributed, but only to the people of the village. Buffaloes may not be driven on these days. Women may not leave the village, though women of other villages are allowed to come. Cleansing with buffalo-dung must not be done. There was some difference of opinion as to whether money might leave the village on these days. Some said not, but it seemed clear that at Kars money might be taken from the village on the *palinol*. The rules were said to be the same for the holy days of all kinds of dairy.

527 784 There are various recognised methods of evading the rules for the holy days, and of avoiding the inconvenience which the regulations might entail on a village.

183 Money may be taken out of the village on the day before the *madnol* and buried or left in some spot where it can be found on the following day, so that if there is an urgent reason why a purchase should be completed on the holy day this can be done.

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

Similarly, women who wish to leave the village on a holy day do so before daybreak. They wait outside the village till the sun is up, then return to the village, have their meals and do any necessary work, and may then leave. Having left the village before daybreak, a woman is apparently regarded as ceremonially absent during her return to the village, and by making this false start she is held to be keeping the law. 527 784 183

If there is an urgent reason why a woman from another village should come on a *madnol*, she must arrive after sunset.

If any of these rules are broken, the culprit may have to perform the ceremony of *irnörtiti* or one of the other allied rites. It seemed quite clear, however, that this only happened if some misfortune should befall the offender, his family, or his buffaloes. It would seem that a man might habitually and notoriously desecrate the *madnol*, but no steps would be taken by himself or the community so long as things went well with the man. If he should become ill or if his buffaloes should suffer in any way, he would consult the diviners and they would then certainly find that his misfortunes were due to his infringement of the laws connected with the sacred days. 527 784 688 626 787

As a matter of fact, it does not happen, so far as I could find, that anyone habitually infringes the laws, and breaking the *madnol* or *palinol* rarely forms an occasion for the *irnörtiti* ceremony.

THE ARPATZNOL.

Another sacred day is the *arpatsnol* or *arpasnol*. This is the day of the week on which the father of a man has died. The father of Kutadri and Kòdrner died on a Friday, and every Friday is the *arpatsnol* of these men. I could not learn definitely what are the restrictions for this day, but they seem to be of the same kind as those for the *madnol*, though I am doubtful whether they are very strictly kept. Kutadri and Kòdrner once drove their buffaloes from Kars to Ishavadr on a Friday; the buffaloes were sick, and they moved them without thinking that it was their *arpatsnol*. 527 769 787

[1] [pertaining to the observance of the village holy days. --- Analyst]

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

527 Soon after Kòdrner fell ill and one of the buffaloes died, and
769 the *t.nol* found that the desecration of the *arpatsnol* was one of
787 the causes, though they had also bought things on a Monday, the *madnol* of Kars.

527 There is much variety in the days appointed as the *madnol* or *palinol* of different villages and clans. My records are very incomplete, but they show the most frequent days to be Wednesday and Friday, which are sacred in six clans. Sunday is sacred in five clans, Monday and Tuesday in three, and Thursday in two, while in no clan, so far as my records go, is Saturday a holy day.

527 It will have been noticed that funeral ceremonies may
764 not be held on a *madnol*, and it seems to be exceptional that
796 funeral ceremonies should take place on one of the dairy days. There is very little doubt that it is the prohibition of funerals on village and dairy days which chiefly determines the choice of funeral days. Thus, at Nidrsi, Wednesday is the *madnol*, Monday is the *wursulinol*, Friday is the *tarvalinol*, while the funeral of a male is held on Saturday or Sunday and that of a female on Tuesday or Thursday. Similarly, the village and dairy days of Melgars are Monday and Friday, while the funeral days for males are Sunday and Tuesday, for females Thursday and Saturday. At Kwòdrdoni, the village and dairy days are Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, the funeral days Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

In a few cases, it would seem that funerals may be held on dairy days; thus, at Kars Monday is the *madnol*, Tuesday the *wursulinol*, and Thursday the *kudrpalinol*, while the funeral days for males are Sundays and Tuesdays, for females Thursdays and Saturdays. If a *mani* is used, however, a male funeral must be held on Sunday, and I suspect that the holding of a male funeral on Tuesday is an innovation, and probably the same holds good for the choice of Thursday as a funeral day for females.

The funeral rites are not the only ceremonies which have their appointed days. Nearly every ceremonial occasion among the Todas has its prescribed day, and of these ceremonial days Sunday seems to occupy an especially favoured position. As many ceremonies are appointed for this day as

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

for nearly all the other days of the week put together. It is also the most frequent day for the funerals of males, and it seemed to me that whenever it was possible this day was chosen.

Several clans, however, have Sunday as the *madnol*, and if the laws of this day are observed ceremonies of which feasts form a part could not be performed on this day in these clans; thus, though I have no definite information on the point, I have no doubt that the *irpalvusthi* ceremony could not be performed.

It so happens that the clans which have Sunday as their *madnol* or *palinol* are Pan, Kanòdrs, Päm, Kwòdrdoni, and Pedrkars, all clans seated in outlying parts of the hills about which my information is less complete than in other cases. None of the larger and more important central clans about whose customs I obtained the fullest information had either *madnol* or *palinol* on a Sunday, and I have very little doubt that in those clans which have Sunday as a *madnol*, ceremonies, at any rate of a festive nature, would not be performed on this day. There is little doubt that the great prominence of Sunday as a feast day would have come out less strongly if my information about the outlying clans had been more complete.

I must leave this point uncertain, but I have little doubt that with fuller information about the customs of different clans we should find that the choice of days for ceremonies is chiefly, if not entirely, determined by the necessity of holding these on some day other than the *madnol* or *palinol*.

At the same time, there can be no doubt that Sunday is one of the days appointed for a festival or ceremony very frequently, and this is especially the case at the *ti*, the procedure of which is to a large extent uninfluenced by considerations concerned with the *madnol* and *palinol*. Even here, however, these days are not altogether without influence, for certain ceremonial days at the *ti* are feast days for the clan to which the *ti* belongs, and this would make it necessary that the ceremonies should not be held on the *madnol* of the clan. Certain days were said to be feast-days throughout the whole Toda community, but I have no knowledge as to how these

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

527 days would be kept by those clans on whose *madnol* they
796 might fall.

Several previous writers, when recording the choice of
621 certain days for the funeral ceremonies, have ascribed to the
618 Todas a belief in lucky and unlucky days, in days of good
777 or evil omen. One man, when telling me that Sunday, Wednesday, and Saturday were days on which the *irpalvusthi* ceremony might be performed at the *tarvali*, referred to them as lucky days.

I think it is extremely doubtful whether the Toda in general has any such belief, and if he has, it is probable that the idea is a recent importation borrowed from the Hindus, among whom the belief in lucky or unlucky days is of course very prevalent. The distinction among the Todas is rather into feast and fast days, using the latter term in a wide sense.

It is possible that the institutions of *madnol* and *palinol* have grown out of the belief in unlucky days; that certain things were not done on these days because they were unlucky days, and that so there came into existence a code of rules prescribing what might and what might not be done.

The chief difficulty in the way of this view is the fact that the different clans of the Todas have different sacred days. One would expect lucky and unlucky days to be the same for the whole community. The sacred days place very definite restrictions on the intercourse between different clans, and this inconvenience must be increased by the fact that the different clans have different *madnol*, and there is no obvious reason why this difference in the choice of sacred days should have come about.

The distinction between *madnol* and *palinol* is, again, one which can hardly have grown out of the belief in unlucky days, though perhaps, given a village day, it is not an unnatural step for the Todas to have decided that they would have a dairy day also.

527 Whatever the origin of the laws regulating Toda custom in
777 this respect, I think there is little doubt that when at the present time a given act is done or not done on a given day, the action is not based on a belief in lucky or unlucky days,

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

but, as nearly always among the Todas, on custom prescribing that the act shall or shall not be done on that day. 527 C 777

There are, however, other restrictions or relaxations connected with certain days of the week which have probably arisen out of a belief in lucky and unlucky days.

There is a regulation (now almost a dead letter) that the Todas must not cross the Paikara and Avalanche rivers on Tuesdays, Fridays, or Saturdays. Sundays and Wednesdays, on the other hand, are the days on which the *wursol* is allowed to sleep in the hut with ordinary people, and Mondays and Thursdays are the days on which the *palol* is visited by Todas other than the *mòrol*. Such facts suggest that the three days on which the rivers should not be crossed are unlucky days, but, on the other hand, the days which I was once told were lucky days included Saturday. The evidence at our command is conflicting, and does no more than suggest that the restrictions or relaxations common to the whole community may be connected with the belief in lucky and unlucky days. [784]

Attention may here be called to the fact that the Todas evidently regard the first half of the month as most auspicious for their ceremonies, and it would seem that in most cases the first appropriate day of the week after the new moon is the proper day for nearly every Toda ceremonial. I met with no case in which any ceremony was appointed for the period of the full moon or for the second half of the moon's period. At the present, it seems that such ceremonies as those connected with the migrations of the buffaloes may take place in the second half of the month, but I have no doubt that this is only a result of modern laxity. 527 796

The definite values assigned to different days of the week is a very special feature of Toda custom, and in the *madnol* we have an institution very closely resembling that of the Sabbath. In a busier community than that of the Todas, the existence of different *madnol* for different clans of the community would soon become a serious obstacle to carrying on the business of life, and such a community would probably agree that all clans should have the same holy day. At present the *madnol* is undoubtedly more sacred than the other 527 621

1: Rivers E-5 (ca. 1901-02) 1906 Toda

527 621 sacred days, and if the latter were then to be neglected, we should have a community in which various activities were prohibited on one day of the week, and the institution so arising would differ very little from the Hebrew Sabbath. It is possible that the Todas show in an early stage the institution of a Sabbath in which the whole community has not yet settled on a single and joint holy day.

SACRED NUMBERS

788 801 Certain numbers recur with great frequency in the dairy ceremonial, and may be regarded as having a special sanctity on this account. There seems to be a general preference for uneven numbers, and this preference comes out very strongly in the *tesherst* ceremony, in which an uneven number of men must take part on any one occasion. The number of men performing this ceremony together must be three, five, seven, nine, &c.

In the dairy ritual the numbers which occur chiefly are three, seven and nine, but other numbers have also been singled out in other branches of Toda lore. The numbers which occur in ceremonial may now be considered in detail.

Three.—A large proportion of the ritual acts of the dairy are performed three times, usually with the accompaniment of the sacred syllable. *Oṁ* uttered thrice, once with each performance of the act. This three-fold performance is especially marked in the ceremony of putting milk or curds on the sacred bells and in the ceremonial drinking of buttermilk. In the ordination ceremonies, the number occurs less frequently. The purificatory drinking is always done seven times or some multiple of seven, but after drinking, the candidate rubs himself three times with the shoots or bark, and, at the ordination of a *palol*, the candidate drinks three times seven on several occasions. Other acts during the ordination of the *palol* are also performed thrice, and the same number occurs in the ordination of the *kaltmokh*.

Acts are performed thrice with special frequency in the ceremonial of the *ti*, and, at the ordinary dairy, this number is especially connected with the 'feeding' of the sacred